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THE JACKSON COUNTY STORY, A CASE STUDY.

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THIS IS A FACTUAL CASE STUDY OF SOCIAL CHANGE IN A LARGE SUBURBAN SCHOOL DISTRICT EXPERIENCING CONFLICT BETWEEN THE SCHOOL BOARD, THE ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER OF THE SCHOOL SYSTEM, AND THE GENERAL PUBLIC DURING A PERIOD OF RAPID POPULATION GROWTH. THE STUDY TRACES THE HISTORY OF VARIOUS PROBLEMS ARISING FROM RAPID POPULATION GROWTH AND THE INTRODUCTION OF CURRICULUM CHANGES FACED BY JACKSON COUNTY SCHOOL BOARDS AND SCHOOL SUPERINTENDENTS FOR A PERIOD BEGINNING SOON AFTER WORLD WAR II THROUGH THE 1963-64 SCHOOL BUDGET FORMULATION. THE SIMILARITIES BETWEEN THE PROBLEMS OF JACKSON COUNTY AND THOSE OF MANY OTHER AREAS MAKE THIS STUDY SUITABLE FOR USE IN GRADUATE SEMINARS AND INSERVICE PROGRAMS. (AL)

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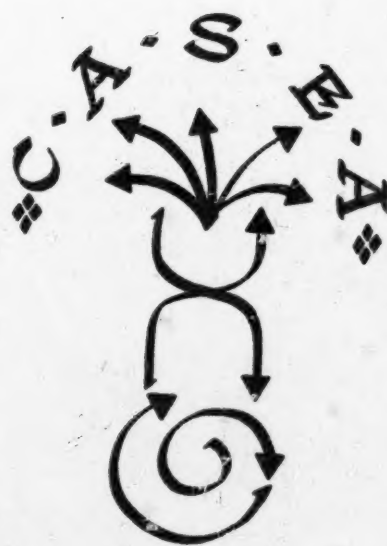
A Case Study

by

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CHAPTER I

THE SETTING FOR CONFLICT

Population Characteristics

Jackson County is a large geographical area containing approximately 500 square miles and a population of more than 300,000 people. It is adjacent to a large metropolitan center. Prior to the 1920's, the county was inhabited primarily by people engaged in agricultural pursuits. Following World War I, however, as suburbanism became increasingly a way of life for millions of Americans, a number of entrepreneurial, managerial and professional families moved into Jackson County from the central city to escape the crowded conditions of urban living. The trend of suburban development continued and finally, following World War II, a broader range of socio-economic groups moved into Jackson County from the central city causing it, in itself, to become a highly urbanized area.

In the 1960 census the average population per square mile in Jackson County was more than twelve times that of the United States. During the decade 1950-1960, the population increase of Jackson County was approximately six times the rate of the national increase in population and more than three times the rate of that of its home state. In 1960 almost 90 per cent of the population resided in urban residential areas and less than 2 per cent were rural farm residents. The 1960 census revealed that less than 4 per cent of Jackson County's population was non-white.

Jackson County is adjacent to a large governmental center. Along with the large number of governmental workers, there were, during this period, associated activities which brought into the area a significant number of scientific, professional and other highly skilled and well-educated people. According to the 1960 census, approximately one-fourth of its adult population were college graduates and approximately one-half had attended college. The educational attainment of the citizens of Jackson County was well above both the national and state averages.

It was one of the highest income counties in the country in 1960. Informants reported, however, that, in part, the large median income was due to the unusually large number of two-job families. Nearly

half of the families in Jackson County had incomes in excess of \$10,000, whereas less than 6 per cent of the families had incomes of less than \$3,000 (the poverty level).

Unemployment was not a great problem in this county. The unemployment rate in 1960 was only one-fourth that of the national rate. In 1960, 70 per cent of the employed residents were listed as white-collar workers, as contrasted with 41.1 per cent for the United States. The occupational structure tends to emphasize those occupations which required post-high school education.

Up and Down County

In any mushrooming community, there are a vast number of human and social needs that must be provided, and the quality of good living which people seek in their escape from the central city is adversely affected to the extent that these problems are not solved. Although Jackson County represented a planned suburban development, some of the older residents resented seeing many of the accustomed landmarks disappear to make room for what to them appeared to be ugly, urbanizing characteristics.

The county government was the chief local governmental unit due to the fact that most of the area was unincorporated. In the early years after World War II a new county charter empowered the County Council to develop a land-use plan to provide for the orderly growth and development of the area. County zoning ordinances were finally enacted, but not without considerable political turmoil. Not only did various economic interests hold diverse views on the subject of controlled development of the county, but there also appeared to be a considerable division of opinion and perspective based upon the geographical separation of what was characterized as the "up-county" and "down-county."

The up-county was sparsely settled and was the center for most of the agriculture in the county. The dense down-county population per square mile was many times that of the up-county. While large agricultural enterprises—dairy farming and grain growing—were prevalent in the rolling hills of the up-county, high-rise apartment dwellings were appearing in the 1950's in the down-county. Most of the residents of the down-county were either engaged in commercial enterprises within the county or travelled to the central city daily for their employment.

As Jackson County mushroomed in the 1950's, traffic became unbelievably snarled during the rush hours and was, in fact, difficult at almost every period during the day. Public transportation was inadequate for the population and the road structure was appropriate to the needs of a rural farm population, rather than for a concentrated urban settlement.

When community improvements were proposed, the residents of the up-county accused the remainder of the residents of attempting to obtain "a free ride" at the expense of the large landholders in the up-county. The down-county residents, on the other hand, accused the up-county residents of having narrow, parochial views and a desire to keep tax burdens at a minimum while they held their land in anticipation of the vast profits which they would receive after the population moved into the up-county areas.

The tremendous growth in the Jackson County population was accompanied by significant increases in the tax burden. Home construction was extensive and although there was some commercial development within the county, for the most part, heavy industry to help bear the tax burden was lacking. As evidenced by the large number of children per dwelling unit, the educational burden was particularly significant since the assessed valuation established for each new dwelling was not proportionate to the burden that it imposed upon the community. This was particularly true in more recent years when lower-cost homes were constructed to accommodate the lower middle-class families.

School Enrollments

The up-county residents felt that the primary burdens of education were caused by the influx of population in the down-county, but that the expense had to be borne by the up-county taxpayers. The increase in enrollment can be seen in the accompanying table. In 1938, there were 13,464 pupils enrolled in Jackson County elementary and secondary schools. By 1963, this number had increased seven-fold to 97,792, with 65 per cent of the increase occurring in the 1953-1963 decade. The increase averaged about 5,000 to 6,000 children each year, necessitating the annual addition of approximately 200 new teachers, as well as additional administrative and supervisory personnel.

As one board member expressed the problem, the schools of this county had to be prepared to add the equivalent of more than one classroom each day that school was in session, or approximately one 600-pupil school each month. In 1955, the school district had 1,640 elementary and secondary school teaching stations. By 1962 the number of teaching stations had doubled. In 1962 alone, the school district invested \$16.5 million in school construction and new school sites. The superintendent's annual report that year informed the people that to keep pace with population growth and inflation, the school district would need to spend between \$11 and \$15 million annually during the next five-year period.

The tax rate increased proportionately. Although the statistics show that the assessed valuation per pupil in the county increased during this period, this was primarily a bookkeeping figure since the county underwent several property re-evaluations which increased the as-

TABLE I
POPULATION, ENROLLMENT, SCHOOL HOUSING AND TEACHING STAFF GROWTH, JACKSON COUNTY
1950-51 THROUGH 1963-64 WITH PROJECTION FOR ENROLLMENT TO 1969-70

[illegible]

TABLE 2
FINANCIAL DATA, JACKSON COUNTY, 1950-51 THROUGH 1969-70

	<i>Assessed Valuation Per Pupil</i>	<i>Operating Budget (000)</i>	<i>Capital Budget^a (000)</i>	<i>Total Budget</i>	<i>Tax Return Oper.</i>	<i>Total</i>
1950-51						
51-52						
52-53						
53-54						
54-55			\$ 9,225			
55-56			8,545			
56-57			9,055			
58-59			8,291			
59-60			12,284			
60-61	\$15,380		12,187		1.81	2.19
61-62	16,043		19,173		1.85	2.21
62-63	16,455	\$49,835	15,414	65,249	2.18	2.59
63-64	17,344	53,021	16,472	69,493	2.10	2.54
64-65	17,609	61,284	7,611	68,895		
65-66			17,890			
66-67			16,276			
67-68			18,179			
68-69			12,804			
69-70			10,419			

^a Includes Grades 13 and 14. Of the \$118 million spent from 1954-55 through 1963-64, \$97 million was from county funds; the remainder was from state and federal funds.

essed valuation but did not result in any reduction of the amount paid in taxes. In fact, the up-county residents maintained that the reappraisals resulted in their having to pay a still higher and more disproportionate share of the taxes in view of the fact that their properties, even though still used for agricultural purposes, were reappraised for their potential suburban use.

Growing Heterogeneity of Population

All of these problems tended to intensify not only the basic problems involved in providing the essential services in a rapidly growing area, but also the split that resulted from the influx of population with different aspirations, values, and perspectives. In the period following World War II, there were generally two kinds of people who seemed to be moving into Jackson County and adjacent suburban areas.

There were those who reacted against the increasing influx of Negroes into the central city, the growth of slum areas, and the difficulties associated with the problems of urban renewal and development. Many of these people sought to escape from the central city, not only because they thought that the suburban area was a better place in which to live, but also because the county schools had a reputation for excellence. Increasing pressures for academic achievement

for their children and the forecasts of difficulties for admission to the high prestige colleges and universities led them to seek superior opportunities which they thought would be available to them in the Jackson County schools.

Moving into Jackson County, however, placed a severe financial burden upon them. Their incomes did not increase in proportion to the added costs of living which they experienced. They did not contemplate the new expenditures which would confront them in their endeavors to provide for not only the basic physical needs, but also for such things as a second car, (now that the family car was taken into the central city), and additional expenditures in maintaining an attractive residential appearance replete with lawn, shrubs, accoutrements of sophisticated living to maintain the "atmosphere" of their new surroundings. Many of these people became mortgaged to the hilt and in many cases wives went to work to provide a second income.

Another group of Jackson County residents had similar aspirations but could well afford the price which they had to pay for living in the suburban area. They wanted not only the present and reported level of quality of both the school system and other services in the community but they wanted these improved. The extra expenditures did not constitute a serious threat to their family stability.

Many of the newcomers felt that there was prestige attached to moving to the suburban area. But once they got there they found that the older residents had already established a status hierarchy which was difficult to penetrate because of the recency of their arrival. To their friends in the city they were recognized as having made a successful ascent up the social ladder, but they could, only with patience and over a period of time, achieve the personal satisfaction of being introduced into the normal social activities of their neighbors with whom they were now closely associated.

Many people came into the new community with feelings of hostility aroused by some of the problems they had experienced in the central city. Rather than securing relief from the anxieties which had produced these hostilities, they were experiencing an entirely and possibly even more fundamental set of frustrations that increased the "anti" mental set which they brought with them.

Some of the people consciously escaped from the central city because of the increasing concentration of Negroes in it. They felt that this concentration had resulted in lowering property values and reducing the quality of education in the schools.

The high educational levels of these parents had stimulated an interest in the academic achievement of their children. In Jackson County, high educational standards had existed for a long time and, in many instances, the newcomers found their children were now experiencing difficulties in adapting to the more highly competitive atmosphere. In an educated community, a child's academic achieve-

ment is often a prestige symbol for parents. The newcomers found it difficult to maintain the self-image of their social status in the more exacting competitive struggle of their new environment.

In addition to all of these problems were the frustrations which arose from having to live in a rapidly growing community poorly equipped to handle the crowds.

"Locals" and "Cosmopolitans"

There were several other problems associated with the new life in the community that were fundamental to the issues involved in the 1962 crisis.

There was a considerable division among the people of the community in their aspirations and orientations. Jackson County was divided into two groups. One group might well be termed the *cosmopolitan set*, while the other might be called the *local set*.

The "cosmopolitans" were people who came to this area having had broad experience in governmental, industrial, academic, or other professional affairs. They had travelled extensively, and considered themselves sophisticated as a result of their prior experiences and associations. They were accustomed to spending a significant portion of their income on cultural and educational advantages for their families. Immediate savings were not too important to them, since they were well covered by adequate security and retirement provisions. They had come from sections of the country in which they had participated in local government and were, as a result, somewhat sophisticated in their political attitudes and skills. They tended to be liberal in their outlook, if not on national issues, at least with respect to the provision of social and educational services within the community which were congruent with the levels of aspirations they had for their children.

The "locals" were individuals with a different set of expectations, and they were apparently fragmented into two seemingly quite distinct groups.

One set of "locals" consisted primarily of governmental workers below the policy and managerial levels who had modest incomes and who were, in many instances, struggling to rise up the civil service ladder. They had relatively minor experience outside of the narrow technical occupations in which they were engaged. They held high aspirations for their children and for the kinds of community services which they thought should be provided. However, they lacked the experience needed to work effectively in local politics. Since their adult occupations had been primarily in governmental services, they had been "Hatched." The Hatch Act and comparable state legislation prevented the participation of governmental workers in partisan politics.

When they moved to the suburbs, many of this group of "locals" discovered that they could play a role in the nonpartisan political life

of the community, but they lacked the necessary experience for becoming politically effective. Under the circumstances, they tended to be relegated to the ranks of the followers rather than the leaders.

Another serious problem confronted these "locals." On the one hand, they had a high level of aspiration for the quality of their living in the community and the quality of the educational enterprise in which their children were engaged. On the other hand, they lacked a breadth of knowledge of what it takes to maintain the level of services which they wanted. They had never served on boards nor become intimately enough involved in the local governmental process to know the procedures of decision-making or the problems associated with the allocation of resources for a large-scale governmental enterprise. They had, as previously indicated, anxieties about getting their children into the right colleges and universities; but they also had worries about being able to pay their debts and maintaining respectability in the new community. They did not understand why taxes in the new community should be so much higher than those in the community from which they had come.

A second group of "locals" consisted of individuals who had grown up in Jackson County and who were fundamentally dependent upon the economy of the community itself. They were accused by the other residents of manipulating the resources available in the county for their personal profit.

Many of the people in this group were not particularly concerned about "progress" or community planning and development. They viewed problems in relation to their own local interests and hoped for solutions that were most economically advantageous to themselves. Many claimed nostalgia for the good old days and the bucolic simplicity which they associated with the rural community of their childhood. As long as governmental services met their needs and aspirations, they did not desire the refinements of modern education or community services which some of their more socially mobile neighbors sought to obtain. They, like the "cosmopolitans," had considerable skill in local community processes, and it was the confrontation of these two groups that proved to be a major factor in the elections issue of 1962.

Leadership Roles of Men and Women

Although the evidence is not entirely consistent, there is considerable indication that women played a more pronounced leadership role than that found in urban areas. One observer called Jackson County a gynecocracy. Since most of the men spent the greater part of their waking hours at work outside of the community, and furthermore were "Hatched," political activities in many governmental and social processes were left to their wives. These women were, on the average, more highly educated than the typical suburban housewife. The ex-

tent to which this was true appeared to be more consistently related to the cosmopolitan than to the local group.

The most important organizations representing the cosmopolitan group were the League of Women Voters, the American Association of University Women, and the Parent-Teacher Associations. Many of the observers indicated that these were the most powerful and influential groups within the county. During the years 1948-1962, the people who appeared most able to get things done were associated either directly or indirectly with these organizations. To secure their endorsement was considered essential for getting elected or having an issue passed. These organizations generally took identical stands upon the major issues which confronted the community.

Two of the organizations, the A.A.U.W. and the League of Women Voters, were exclusively feminine. Although there was a large number of men in leadership positions in the P.T.A., particularly in the County Council of P.T.A.'s and in local presidencies, the active workers and the grass roots leadership were, to a considerable extent, dominated by women.

On the other hand, the most important organizations representing the "locals" were dominated by men and could be characterized as economic-interest groups. Prior to 1962 these consisted of real estate, land development, and construction interests. Primarily, such interests formed the nucleus for various efforts to effect changes in educational leadership prior to 1962 and for the establishment of the Taxpayers Association which played a fundamental role in the 1962 County Council and school board elections.

Several reputedly ultra-conservative groups were organized in the post-war period. The Americans for Constitutional Action and a group which ultimately became known as the Council for Better Education were two of these. Their membership was small and derived primarily from the local set. Men and women seemed to be equally involved in leadership roles in these groups.

Communication Problems

One other factor of considerable concern in the county was the problem of communication. Since the county was so large, it was difficult for candidates or local leaders to maintain face-to-face relationships with their constituencies.

Local news, of necessity, was disseminated through the mass media serving the area. Not a single daily newspaper was published in the county, in spite of the sizable population. The central city had several nationally famous newspapers of general circulation in the county but which were an inadequate source of local news. County news, inevitably, had a low priority value in relationship to international, national and city news in the metropolitan papers.

There were several weekly newspapers which tended to reflect

local interests. The extent to which school news was reported was, of course, varied. Some of the newspapers had too limited resources to cover all facets of community life adequately. Publishers feared it would adversely affect their circulation and advertising volume if they became involved in local controversial issues. There were local radio but no television stations. Therefore, the county was to a considerable degree dependent upon the central city and its media of communication for the coverage which it needed.

Summary

By 1960, Jackson County had become a community of many contrasts. It contained within it many elements essential for conflict, and it faced many problems.

It was a self-governing unit containing only a few incorporated towns. Essentially, the more than 300,000 citizens of the county were governed by a County Council which had to take into consideration the needs of various, disparate geographical centers.

There were many anxieties among the citizens, anxieties associated not only with national and international problems, but with those related to the local economic problems of the inhabitants. Not the least of these was the problem arising from the residents having high levels of aspirations for themselves and their children which called for the provision of resources which increasingly taxed the ability of a large number of the people.

Politically, the community was split between people who wanted to make the county a showplace in which to live and those who could not afford some of the high-priced services or who regarded them as wanton expenditures.

Divisive forces were at work within the community, and all they needed was the spark to ignite the conflagration. It came in 1962.

CHAPTER II

A NEW SUPERINTENDENT COMES TO JACKSON COUNTY

The Predecessors

An incoming superintendent does not have a clean slate upon which to begin his administration. He inherits an on-going organization, and all eyes are upon him to see how he will handle the problems that are transmitted to him from his predecessors. In addition to receiving some operating procedures and problems that have already been developed within the organization, he inherits an image of the superintendency which was established by his predecessors and which defines the expectations of many of the members of the organization for his performance. Some of the expectations are harmonious with the actual leadership functions of the superintendent, and in the event that he performs in accordance with them, he will gain the acceptance of both his subordinates and the public with whom he comes in contact. His failure to live in accordance with this set of expectations could arouse resentment, confusion and criticism.

A second set of expectations may characterize the position in seemingly unfavorable terms. His subordinates and the publics to whom he is visible may maintain that "all superintendents do these things," and it may be assumed that the new incumbent will act in this way. The image will not be changed until he demonstrates conclusively that he has a different set of perspectives and a different image of his role.

Dr. Brush's Administration, 1922-1953

For over 30 years, the Jackson County schools had as their superintendent a man, Dr. Thomas Brush, who had established the definition of the responsibilities of the superintendency and who had been the "father image" for the school organization. Dr. Brush saw the school system develop into a sizable organization, and he gave it the kind of leadership needed to provide the physical facilities appropriate to the growth experienced.

Some citizens, however, felt that toward the latter part of Dr. Brush's administration, bricks and mortar were emphasized over pro-

gram. Also, in the interests of economy, he kept central office personnel at a minimum, which resulted in more personnel reporting to the superintendent than he could deal with effectively. Principals did not feel that they had the authority to make the important decisions, and the superintendent was bogged down with a host of petty decisions which made it all the more difficult for him to handle the larger problems which confronted the school district.

Shortly before his retirement in 1953, Dr. Brush was the object of attack from a group known as the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement. This group was closely aligned in attitude with the program later advocated by the National Council for Basic Education, a program which was the forerunner of an organized campaign to stress the fundamentals and to eliminate "frills" from the curriculum. Public school personnel were accused by this group of being both "progressives" and "wastrels" who needed the constant supervision of elements in the community which could dictate the "proper" pattern of curriculum development. This group was also concerned lest "subversive" teachers take over the classrooms and "un-American" ideas infiltrate the curriculum.

One investigator of this and similar groups felt that there was considerable evidence to suggest that the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement was more concerned with the problems of increasing tax rates than with the quality of the educational program. One of the founders of the organization, a long-standing member of the school board, vehemently denied this allegation and held that many members of the organization were willing to expend the necessary funds for education, providing that unnecessary frills were eliminated and adequate academic emphases were maintained.

Dr. Moore's Administration, 1953-1957

Shortly after Dr. Brush's retirement in 1953, he died. His successor, Dr. Winston Moore, had been both a teacher and administrator. Although he was much more conservative in his educational views than his predecessor, the activities of the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement continued. Dr. Moore found himself the object of criticism which came from one group which considered him too liberal and responsible for operating an excessively expensive school system, and from another group which criticized him for being too conservative and failing to give the leadership necessary to help the school organization adapt to the newer needs of the expanding community and nation.

Dr. Moore concentrated authority in the central office. Like his predecessor, he had a very limited central office staff and insisted that principals refer serious problems to him for decisions. Since Dr. Moore had to make most of the significant decisions, those who were unhappy

with the decisions looked upon him as the source of policies with which they could not agree.

A major change occurred in the school organization under Dr. Moore's administration. Previously, under state law, the school board had been appointive. Now, the state constitution was changed and the school board of Jackson County became elective. All seven members were elected at one time in 1955 with the provision that the terms of four were to expire in 1958 and three in 1960. This pattern was to be maintained in succeeding years.

Dr. Moore thus became the executive officer of a board which had not appointed him. Within a short period of time, he was having considerable difficulties with the board which was composed primarily of individuals who felt that his conservative educational philosophy restricted the proper development of the educational program. The chairman of the board at that time was Mr. Durham, who was not only a conservative, but also one of the leaders in the organization of the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement. Although respected by the other board members for his business acumen, Mr. Durham usually opposed the majority on all matters pertaining to curriculum and personnel policies. His lack of confidence in Dr. Moore was due less to his feeling that Moore was unable to develop the kind of curriculum which should prevail in the schools than to his feeling that Moore was not a competent administrator. Under these circumstances, both the efficiency and economy of operations suffered.

Although there were other differences of opinion, the school board acted unanimously in voting for the non-renewal of Dr. Moore's contract in 1957. The reasons officially given for the dismissal included the superintendent's failure to handle adequately a textbook censorship controversy, the suspension of several high school students for fraternity membership without consultation with the board, and poor judgment in administrative matters which were of vital concern to the board.

Underlying Dr. Moore's termination was also a controversy over racial integration. Dr. Moore wanted to avoid an overt controversy on the issue, whereas the majority of the board wanted to see the matter handled positively and decisively. Even more important was the feeling of the majority that the schools were not keeping pace with new developments. They wanted a superintendent who would effect program changes.

In Dr. Moore's successor, the school board sought a superintendent who had experience in the administration of a county school system of considerable size, ability to give leadership to a complex school organization, and willingness to take the initiative in providing the educational direction which they deemed necessary.

Superintendent Walters

After an extensive search, the man they chose for the job was Dr. Trent Walters. He became superintendent in 1957 and inherited from his predecessors a going concern which faced many internal and external problems. Walters held his doctorate in educational administration from the University of Chicago and, prior to coming to Jackson County, had served as assistant superintendent in a county school system of another state. He had a reputation among educators as forward-looking in his educational philosophy and dynamic in his ability to handle the managerial problems of the school organization.

Walters pictured the superintendent's role as a facilitator of change and when he came to Jackson County, he had the board's mandate to improve the educational program. He was interested in the Jackson County superintendency provided the board offered him, by their cooperation, the opportunity to build a school system recognized among authorities as one of the outstanding in the country. The board was unanimous in its decision to employ him.

Walters looked upon the superintendency as the position within the school system which provided educational leadership for the school board, community, and school organization. He said that he wanted to build the kind of staff at all levels of the school organization which would creatively study their problems, evaluate the program developments, and constantly challenge the superintendent with new ideas.

He held that it was the superintendent's function to stimulate interest in professional growth and advancement, to encourage professional activities among members of the staff through the development of in-service improvement programs, and to organize activities in which staff were building new materials and programs for upgrading the curriculum. As the superintendent of schools, he believed that it was his function to find out how each member of the staff could make his professional contribution and have his creative capacities released to maximum advantage.

With these images of his role in mind, Walters assumed that it was his responsibility to establish an atmosphere within the schools which encouraged staff evaluation and the development of new ideas. It was only through such means, he said, that the full professional experience and knowledge of the staff could be utilized in the constant improvement of the educational program.

Walters believed that the function of administration was to legitimize creativity within the organization. He viewed the organization as having constant need for adaptation, both to new social demands and to the findings of research in education. He saw, therefore, that his job as the chief administrator was to remove the barriers to the adaptive function of the organization and to open doors so that personnel could experiment and conduct research leading to the improvement of the educational program. He stated that experimentation in

instructional procedures and programs was desirable provided there were safeguards to assure such experimentation was not detrimental to the children.

Walters' Problems

Walters came into a community in which there were existing seeds of frustration and potential conflict. He discovered that the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement had been reactivated and now identified the new superintendent as the primary target for their criticisms of the public schools. Ironically, one of their leaders, Mr. Durham, had been the *one* board member who had interviewed Dr. Walters in his home town and had joined the others in recommending his election as superintendent. This group gradually became increasingly discontented with the kinds of curricular changes the superintendent encouraged. Walters, they believed, was one of the principal barriers to the accomplishment of their goals.

Within the school organization, Walters saw several problems which were of a different order and complexity. Soon after his election, he attempted to arrange a conference with Dr. Moore so that an orderly transfer of responsibility could be achieved and, also, so he could benefit from Dr. Moore's insights into the nature of the school organization and its problems. Dr. Moore avoided any such arrangements, and Walters never had an opportunity to benefit from his predecessor's evaluations of the schools and their problems.

Upon his initial evaluations of the school organization, Walters felt that he had to solve four basic problems in order to establish and maintain stable and effective organization.

First, Walters was confronted with a number of personnel problems. The achievement of his goal of maintaining high levels of competence in the educational enterprise required that the key people in the school organization be individuals of outstanding abilities, dedicated to the improvement of the educational program, and possessed with the spark of creativity necessary to initiate new programs.

Walters inherited in key positions individuals whom he had not, of course, selected and who had been placed in these positions for various reasons. One key assistant superintendent was reputedly a candidate for the superintendency at the time that Walters' predecessor was employed. He was also reputedly an active candidate at the time of Walters' selection. Various individuals knowledgeable of the internal relationships of personnel within the school organization suggested that he was not entirely loyal to Walters' predecessor. Moreover, he did not attempt to facilitate the changeover in administrations or seek to build confidence in Walters among the key personnel. Having the responsibility for the administration of the personnel function, the assistant superintendent was able to select principals loyal to him who felt that their future stability and promotion within the school organ-

ization were dependent upon their maintaining cordial relationships with him. Consequently, he had built up an informal structure within the organization composed of many of the key personnel who supported him and who looked to him as the true leader of the enterprise. Walters felt that this man would have to be relocated in the organization so that he no longer was in a position to block the carrying out of the superintendent's decisions. Walters made, as a result of his evaluations, some shifts in personnel which were not acceptable to some individuals who were key communication links with other strategically placed positions in the school structure.

A second problem concerned the nature of the staff organization. Walters wanted to develop the kind of organization which would enable the teachers and principals to conduct effectively the program within each local school attendance unit. He wanted the basic decisions made on the local level with the central office having the responsibility for development of over-all policy. The central office would also coordinate the efforts of the personnel, develop the necessary resources, and assist local administrators and teachers in conducting experiments and generally working toward the improvement of educational procedures.

In order to achieve what he considered to be a desirable decentralization of decision-making within the school organization, Walters demoted all assistant superintendents soon after he took office. He made them directors of various functions, and filled the one remaining position of assistant superintendent with a person from outside of the district. He also attempted to inject new ideas and perspectives into the school organization by bringing in from outside other key personnel who would not be bound by the procedures and traditions that had accumulated in the past.

Walters placed considerable emphasis upon the development of the role of the principal as the instructional leader in his building. This necessitated a reorientation of the roles of central office personnel as well as that of the building principals. Not only did he encounter some at least covert opposition from central office personnel, but many of the principals felt that this was a challenge which they were not fully prepared to meet.

A third problem of some magnitude which confronted the new superintendent was that of updating the curriculum. When Walters became superintendent of the Jackson County school system, with its enrollment of 50,000 pupils dispersed in school buildings over an extensive geographical area, there were few curriculum guides which would coordinate the instructional program or give guidance to the teaching staff in the selection of instructional experiences for the children. Each teacher was independent in the manner in which he conducted his classroom, even to the selection of instructional materials beyond that of the commonly adopted textbooks in the district.

Coupled with the *laissez-faire* attitude that had prevailed with respect to the coordination and direction of the instructional program was the absence of in-service education and curriculum development work among the teachers, save for isolated examples which were centered in individual school buildings.

Walters developed three broad approaches for upgrading the quality of the program. First, he developed some in-service activities centered around instructional evaluation, planning and improvement themes. Second, he felt teachers should be involved in professional educational programs to upgrade their competencies and in evaluative committees to determine the effectiveness of educational practices within the schools and to develop curriculum guides and handbooks to be used in the establishment of minimum standards for the school district. As a third attack upon the *status quo*, Walters felt that it would be necessary to introduce cautiously a number of experimental programs through which the staff would have an opportunity to determine to what extent some of the newer educational media could reasonably be introduced on a broad scale within the schools.

Walters' approach to all of these problems created some insecurity among various members of the school staff, but even had he not advocated innovations in both organizational structures and educational programs, he would have been faced with the fourth problem of attempting to build some cohesiveness among the professional members of the school organization.

In a school system faced with as much growth as that of Jackson County, Walters found the problem of teacher recruitment an acute one. To provide personnel both for the new classrooms each year and for the replacement of staff members who were retiring or moving away, school officials frequently had to compromise their standards and permit the employment of personnel who were not capable of carrying on an educational program of the high quality which they felt the community wanted.

There was a considerable gulf between the best and the poorest teachers in the school organization, and at the same time there was a considerable discrepancy in the educational orientations and degrees of professional responsibility of the individuals who were employed. Except for efforts that were made by principals within their own buildings, there had been no attempts previous to Walters' incumbency to build a concept of an integrated staff working toward the solution of its basic educational problems. Walters' efforts to solve the problems of locating the right people in the key positions, of re-orienting the staff organization, of developing in-service training programs, of introducing educational experimentation, and of developing standards and guides which would restrict the freedom of activity of teachers all tended to produce among the teachers considerable insecurity and unrest which were focused upon the superintendent as the person

who was instrumental in attempting to effect changes for which the staff was not prepared.

Walters spent a significant amount of time during the early months of his incumbency visiting schools and gaining first-hand information about what was happening in the schools. The information which he thus collected and the experiences which he had convinced him of the need for proceeding rapidly to the solution of some of the problems which the schools faced. However, even if he had felt that it was more appropriate to move slowly, he recognized that he had a mandate from the board to introduce a more effective school organization, to upgrade the educational program, and to take all steps necessary to weed out the incompetents and to improve the quality of the professional staff.

That Walters administered the schools adequately insofar as the board's desires were concerned is evidenced by the fact that when his first term expired in 1961, the board unanimously renewed his contract for an additional four years. Immediately thereafter, however, there occurred a series of problems which tended to alter drastically the course of events for the Jackson County District.

CHAPTER III

INTRODUCING EDUCATIONAL CHANGES

Walters' Strategy for Change

Walters recognized that the Jackson County schools were too large and complex to enable anyone to introduce change on a massive front throughout the entire school organization. Consequently, he developed a strategy which would enable changes to be introduced in a few attendance centers and gradually, if found to be desirable, spread throughout the district.

Walters' strategy involved three phases. First, he intended through his in-service programs to encourage the evaluation of new ideas by members of his staff, and, hence, to legitimize the efforts made by the more responsive teachers and principals to develop experimental programs.

Second, he recognized that the mere introduction of a desirable program would not enable it to spread to other school attendance units throughout the district, nor would there necessarily be a strong basis upon which to build public confidence in the new program. Therefore, he suggested that all new programs be looked upon as experiments, out of which would emerge research endeavors for evaluating their effectiveness in accomplishing specified educational goals. He encouraged experimental designs so that new programs could be compared with conventional procedures, and he helped allocate resources for conducting research to obtain information about the comparative effectiveness of the new programs. In this fashion, he hoped to be able to accelerate the spread of ideas that were found to be good and to eliminate those that did not seem worthy of continuation.

The third aspect of his strategy was to involve a number of members of the staff and the public in the planning, conducting and evaluating of the programs. In this way, many people would develop a knowledge of the problems associated with the introduction of the changes and, whenever such changes gained acceptance by these people, a commitment toward their more general diffusion throughout the school organization would result.

Programs of Change

Coordinated Educational Program

Efforts to introduce changes into the school district proceeded on many fronts. There was one rather massive effort to develop a continuous program of instruction in fundamental skills from kindergarten through junior college in the district. The purpose was to break down the previous separation between the elementary, secondary, and junior college levels. The program was developed in the superintendent's office and was carried out by central office personnel, assigned to specific instructional areas. Longitudinal committees of teachers and principals were organized to work cooperatively on various curriculum problems.

This program aroused considerable resentment among the secondary school principals and teachers who felt their problems differed from those of the elementary school personnel. Since the program was effected through administrative regulations, the secondary school people felt that it had been forced upon them and that it resulted in their losing prestige within the school organization.

Lunch-Hour Aides

Some programs arose through local initiative. For instance, at one school, a P.T.A. group organized lunch-hour aides to relieve teachers so that they could have a duty-free lunch hour. The program started with the P.T.A. raising a small amount of money to enable teachers to buy games or other equipment to keep the pupils so occupied that close supervision was not necessary. The principal encouraged the P.T.A., however, to use their funds instead to employ a playground aide to relieve some of the teachers from this chore. The P.T.A. accepted this idea and the aide was employed. To overcome some of the legal problems involved, one teacher remained on duty. The aide came every day and rotated among the rooms, supervising lunch and play so that the teacher could obtain some relief. After this program had been in effect for approximately two years, the principal and some of the personnel associated with it were invited to present an evaluation of it to the board. The superintendent was impressed with the program and recommended that its support be included in the budget as a permanent part of the district's program. However, the board rejected this proposal, and the program continued in only a few schools under P.T.A. sponsorship and support.

Resource Teachers

Another new program effected by the central office was the employment of three resource teachers who visited the schools to help classroom teachers with their planning. These resource teachers worked particularly in the areas of mathematics, science and reading. This approach was devised primarily to assist in the orientation of the

800 teachers new to the district each year and to help these teachers in areas in which they were weak. This idea was initiated originally by some supervisors on the staff of the central office who, together with a group of principals, worked out the details which were recommended to the superintendent. The idea was not well received by a large proportion of the teachers and by some principals. One of them stated, "I don't know what to do with these people who are running around the building all the time." In one or two instances when the resource teachers regularly relieved the classroom teachers of some instructional responsibilities, they appeared to have been fairly well received, but many of the teachers felt that having to deal with the resource teachers was an additional claim upon their time and suggested that they were not well qualified to handle instruction in all areas of concern. Undoubtedly, some jealousies also arose. One principal stated that resentment of the resource teacher program in his building was such that his teachers rejected it completely in spite of the benefits which they could have obtained from it.

Foreign Language in the Elementary School

The introduction of foreign language in the elementary schools was initiated by a group of parents in cooperation with the principal of one elementary school. It was introduced originally on a tuition basis with the proceeds paying the salary of the teacher. The P.T.A. actually employed the teacher, and classes were held in the school building after regular school hours. The program aroused considerable interest and the pressure exerted by parents resulted in its introduction on the same basis in other schools. Gradually, there was additional parental pressure exerted upon the school board to make the program an integral part of the elementary school curriculum and include it in the district budget. The board was encouraged to take over support of the foreign language program and to extend it into the junior and senior high schools so that the instruction of the children would be continuous.

Although there was some enthusiasm at the start, many of the principals and teachers were antagonistic to the program because there were some difficult administrative problems that had to be worked out. Also, some teachers thought that there were already enough basic subject areas in the elementary school program without introducing a new area of questionable benefit. One principal who was favorably disposed toward the program said that those teachers in his building who received some break in their teaching schedules as a result of the foreign language program considered it desirable. But to some it was an added chore and a burden, and they tended to dislike it.

One of the most serious problems involved in the administration of the foreign language program in the elementary schools was that it required the involvement of a large number of principals and teach-

ers in the extensive research program associated with it. The research program was set up so that in some schools all of the children at a given grade level had to take a foreign language. The purpose was to determine the extent to which a foreign language should be required of all children. Research revealed some pupils were not sufficiently motivated to gain anything from the program and others were obviously incapable of handling the second language. Some of the teachers who were working in the program were not adequately prepared to deal with the kinds of problems which confronted them. The parents of some of the children who were having difficulty in some of the fundamentals opposed the program because they thought that their children were overburdened with the foreign language instruction. Consequently, at the same time that the board was confronted with demands for the extension of the elementary school foreign language program, it was also faced with strong opposition to it, both from some staff members and a segment of the public-at-large.

New Mathematics

The experimental mathematics program arose out of extensive work at the State University. Some of the teachers had participated in certain aspects of the research and wanted to see the program developed in the Jackson County schools. On the whole, however, the new program was imposed by the central office. Teachers generally did not ask for it but were requested to volunteer for participation in the experimental program. The principals were more generally involved in requesting the development of the program than were the teachers. Research persons from the University and also from junior and senior high school teaching positions were called into the elementary schools to assist in the development of various phases of the program. Outside experts spoke to teachers and principals, and a summer workshop was presented to teachers to acquaint them with the techniques which they would use.

There was, however, brief teacher resistance to this program. For some, the new methods and content involved a complete reorientation to the teaching of mathematics. To others it involved a necessary refinement of training beyond that which they had. There was also some resentment on the part of parents who found their children studying arithmetic in a manner which was foreign to them, and, as a result, they could not always assist their children with their homework when requested. The mathematics program, however, was broadly accepted, particularly by parents who wanted to see the academic programs intensified.

Ungraded Primary

Although the program for introducing foreign language into the elementary school came about as a result of pressures from the com-

munity, an ungraded primary experiment came about primarily at the request of elementary school principals. One of the leaders in the ungraded primary program was the principal of an elementary school in an upper-middle class neighborhood. The principal had studied the program in detail and, after consultation with some of the authorities in the field and with members of her staff, parents and other administrators, she decided that she would like to experiment with a structure that was less rigid than the traditional graded program. She received the approval of her supervisor to pursue the matter further both with school patrons and members of her staff. She had a number of meetings with parents and teachers in which she reviewed in detail the nature of the ungraded primary program, what it might be able to accomplish, and what would have to be done in this school to develop the program fully. She worked out a detailed statement of the program with the teachers, and they decided, with the assistance of the supervisor from the central office, to proceed with it. Central office personnel assisted in the analysis of available research and conceptual writings on the program. Grade level designations were dropped on the primary level, and movement was permitted from room to room at any time according to the levels of accomplishment of the children.

After the program had been in operation for a period of time, Dr. Walters carefully reviewed its accomplishments. He then brought in a recognized educational authority on the ungraded primary program who spoke to all of the elementary school principals, the school board, and at a public meeting. This stimulated other principals and teachers to give careful consideration to the development of the ungraded primary in their own schools. The experimentation that ensued took various forms. For the district as a whole, the experiments were looked upon as a research project through which the various types of ungraded primary programs could be evaluated. Control groups were established, and the design of the experiment involved a review of accomplishments between the experimental and control schools over a three year period. Classroom teachers were involved in the establishment of programs, in designing the experiment, and in the collection of data through which the evaluations would be made.

One of the schools in which the ungraded primary was attempted was in an apartment house area populated by a large number of Jewish residents. In the traditional Jewish family, the father is the decision-maker. Both father and mother, however, take an active interest in the education of the children and jointly participate in school activities when their children are involved. For a number of years the principal at this school was a young man who was able to communicate adequately with the residents of the community and who was looked upon with great favor by the parents. When he was killed in an automobile accident, the school board appointed a new principal from outside the district who left the system shortly after taking office because

of a charge of unprofessional conduct. A considerable amount of adverse sentiment over this issue developed in the community.

At this critical point, Dr. Walters decided to transfer a woman to this school from the central office supervisory staff who had previously been employed as a principal for several years. Unbeknown to the superintendent, she was reputedly a person with pronounced authoritarian tendencies. She also was a dedicated professional educator who maintained that the prerogatives of the professional staff must not be threatened by the encroachments of the citizenry, since these lay people, she felt, did not have the professional training or experience necessary to make intelligent decisions about the instructional program. She had some unique charismatic characteristics and was able to inspire her subordinates to do what she wanted, but she left little room for group decision-making. Her associates claimed that, although they had great confidence in her professional ability and integrity, she was autocratic in her staff and parent relationships.

In this school, with its large Jewish enrollment, the principal and the teachers had become accustomed to meeting with parents in the late afternoon and evening, thus giving both the father and the mother of the family an opportunity to discuss with the teachers and the principal their children's progress and problems. The new principal held that the teacher's free time, as well as her own, had to be jealously guarded. Under these circumstances, parents who wished to see the teacher or the principal had to do so during the normal school hours. She also felt that frequent parent visitations to the school interfered with the instructional responsibilities of the teachers. Consequently, she ruled that parents could not drop in at any time to see either her or the teachers but must make an appointment with her, and clear appointments with teachers through her office. This schedule and policy placed a difficult burden upon the parents. When the cultural problem of the parents was brought to her attention, she ruled against any change in her policy and conveyed what appeared to some to be a prejudicial attitude.

The ungraded primary program in this school was implemented in only one class and the range of reading levels in this class extended over six levels. The instruction was primarily individualized. Some parents who did not understand or favor the program found their children were in it, whereas other parents who looked upon it with favor discovered their children were excluded from it. The breakdown of communication between the parents and the principal further intensified the problem.

Although this was one of the more extreme issues which stimulated resentment of school patrons toward the school administration, the same thing was happening in other parts of the district as well. Some parents wondered why their children had to be subjected to experimental practices which were outside the realm of their school experi-

ences. Other parents wondered why traditional patterns of school operations continued in their schools while the children of their friends were subjected to new and promising experiences which might better qualify them for the admission to first-rate colleges and universities. In all, the experimentation within the schools was proving to be a controversial issue among both school patrons and the professional staff. Little annoyances were accumulating, and even persons who generally supported school policies were adding volume to the criticisms as a result of their own not entirely answered concerns.

CHAPTER IV

INTERVENING FACTORS

In any school organization, there are usually intervening factors which help produce tensions among the various publics to whom the school superintendent is the visible symbol of the implementation and maintenance of policies with which they are concerned.

Three issues stand out as particularly significant factors influencing the 1962 election at which, among other offices, four school board members were to be elected. These were (1) teachers' salaries, an internal factor; (2) the split in the Democratic Party, an external factor; and (3) the organization of the Council for Better Education, which expressed a concern of the broader society for the public school program.

Teachers' Salaries

In February, 1962, the board of education, after some lengthy budget sessions, failed to provide an increase in the salary schedule for teachers for the ensuing school year. The Jackson County Education Association reported:

With the evident lack of time for full and fair discussion of an improved scale, plus an unwillingness to support additional funds for this purpose, the board postponed all consideration of it until spring.

The board did, however, promise to review the whole matter in depth by the first of May and take appropriate action then. At any rate, there would be no effective salary increase for the teachers until after July 1, 1962.

At the same meeting, the board eliminated the Easter vacation in order to make up for days lost through snow emergencies. Strong protests to this action came from the representatives of the Jackson County Education Association. To make matters even worse in the eyes of the teachers, the board adopted a new administrative salary schedule and appropriated the funds necessary to implement it. The association representative reported that everyone on the administrative salary schedule was advanced at least one step beyond his present salary, providing that he received a satisfactory performance evaluation.

The executive secretary of the educational association reported to

the membership that the school board's position on salaries was in accordance with the recommendation made by the superintendent. He noted that although Dr. Walters had proposed a desirable new index scale for all teachers, he did recommend that its implementation be delayed for one year. In the opinion of the executive secretary, this action caused the school district to lose its favorable position with respect to salaries of teachers both in the state and in adjoining states.

Before the salary increase for teachers was finally approved by the board in the spring of 1962, the superintendent warned the school board that such action would result in a large increase in the tax rate. Although he agreed that the teachers were highly deserving of the raise, Walters could not recommend the complete implementation of the salary schedule at one time because of this unusually large resultant tax increase. The board finally agreed to the increase because they felt a commitment to the teachers. The vote, however, was not unanimous among the board members, and there was evident resentment among the teachers toward the superintendent and those board members who voted in accordance with his recommendations.

Career Recognition Program

As early as 1958, a year after Walters assumed the superintendency, he became identified with a program which the board adopted and which was unpopular among some of the teachers. This was what became known as the Career Recognition Program. The program provided two salary steps beyond the normal salary schedule to give recognition to those teachers who had made an outstanding contribution to the school system. Teachers had to apply for acceptance into the Career Recognition Program, and not all teachers who applied could be accepted for it.

The Education Association strongly opposed the program when it was first proposed by members of the school board who requested that Walters work out the details for its administration. Walters also opposed the program at first because he felt it would be extremely difficult to administer and might act as a divisive factor among the staff at a time when he was attempting to build cohesiveness. However, once the board adopted the program, he felt that it was his responsibility to work for its success. He also recognized that the Career Recognition Program could be a means by which he could accomplish his objective of giving greater responsibility for instructional leadership to the building principals.

The Jackson County Educational Association continued its pronounced opposition and criticism, and when the teachers saw that the program resulted in a greater amount of close supervision from their principals and other supervisory personnel employed by the district, most of them became even more resentful of it. Since Walters was placed in a position of defending the program and of encouraging its

further acceptance, he was identified as the primary target of resentment of those teachers who opposed it.

County Politics

At the same time that these problems were developing, events were happening politically in the broader community which would soon also affect the government of the public schools. Jackson County had been for years a Democratic stronghold. The party had long operated in the southern tradition, and a single political leader, conservative in nature, was its dominant figure. Although it was able to control most of the elected offices in the county, the Democratic Party had been experiencing a split in its ranks since about 1950. The new residents tended to be more liberal than the dominant figures of the party, and they also wanted the party to take an active stand on the issues of providing needed local facilities.

An anti-organization group started to emerge within the Democratic Party in about 1952, and splinter groups were recognized as feeble but emerging political forces in the elections of 1954, 1956, and 1958. In 1956, the party liberals were able to unite with a liberal group in the Republican Party to elect a liberal County Council which developed a new county charter. This success was a blow to the conservatives since the new County Council was able to develop zoning laws which restricted free land use. Many large landholders felt that the new land use policies would severely restrict the profits which they hoped to realize from their holdings.

In 1958, the liberals of the Democratic Party took one-third of the party offices, but both liberals and conservatives considered this a defeat since neither group was able to emerge as a clearly dominant force. By 1960, there were three recognized groups of Democrats—the old line conservatives and two groups of liberals. One group, the coalition group that had been responsible for obtaining the county charter, wished to compromise with the old line and thereby keep the party together for effective political action. The “Young Turks,” however, wanted a clear break with the conservatives and a policy that would encourage more progressive development of the county.

In the spring of 1962, the old-line Democrats were totally defeated in the primary. One old timer said, “They didn’t even give us a precinct committee post.” The old timers, however, were not ready to take their defeat graciously and silently. They mobilized their strength to join with a group of Republicans in the formation of a non-partisan coalition known as County-Above-Party. It was their intention to sweep out the liberals who were in a majority both on the Jackson County Council and the county school board.

The Development of a Major Critic Group

Generally supportive of the incumbents in both the County Council and the school board (as well as Walters and his policies) were the

P.T.A. groups, the League of Women Voters, and the Association of University Women. These groups, with their broadly overlapping memberships, were identified as the primary supporters of more liberal legislation in the county. They strongly endorsed the county charter. Their leaders were identified with liberal politics in the state, the development of strict land-use zoning ordinances, the improvement of roads and highways in the county, the construction of more schools, the extension of the educational program, and higher salaries for teachers.

The Republican Party in the county was traditionally conservative, although it too had its liberal-conservative split. Prior to 1962, however, the party was not considered strong enough to gain political control in the county without support from dissident Democrats. Two other groups, at least, were aligned with the conservative opposition. One was the Taxpayers' Association, which had interlocking ties with the construction industry and the real estate associations. It was active in attempting to reduce local property taxes and kept a vigilant eye on county expenditures, particularly for education. The other group was also interested in governmental economy, but it concentrated its efforts upon the public schools. It was known as the Council for Better Schools. It was an outgrowth of the now defunct Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement. It was charged that among the people affiliated with these groups were individuals who were becoming known as the local leaders of ultra-right wing political organizations.

According to one published source, the Council for Better Education had its origins in 1948. A group of 150 parents presented a petition to the school board protesting the emphasis on social studies and the neglect of the fundamentals. The petition gave the board 15 days to indicate what it intended to do "to improve the conditions." When no satisfactory reply from the school board was received, an organization was formed which was known as the Parents' League for Curriculum Improvement. Its membership included one member of the school board. The avowed major purpose of the League was to achieve greater emphasis placed upon the fundamental skills of reading, writing, spelling, arithmetic and the social sciences. The League drew up a petition demanding 26 points, including curriculum revision, more homework, and less freedom in the classroom. The League, presumably, had contacts with other groups in various parts of the county which were critical of the public schools and desired to see the same curriculum emphases. The committee enlarged its scope of activities to include attacks upon the incumbent superintendent of schools for failure to carry out the program which it endorsed.

The Parents' League existed for about ten years and gradually appeared to fade out of existence. It was superseded in about 1957 by an organization known as the Conservative Club, which expressed con-

cern for the nature of the public school curriculum and wanted to be sure that youth would not be indoctrinated in "moral relativism, welfarism, one-worldism, disrespect for constitutional government and other tenets of the liberal orthodoxy." In November, 1957, the Conservative Club sponsored a meeting at which Mortimer Smith, the Executive Secretary of The Council for Basic Education, was the principal speaker. In addition to urging stress on the so-called fundamentals, the Conservative Club backed certain candidates for the school board in 1958 and also proposed a series of planks on economy in school operations and careful scrutiny of all school expenditures.

When their candidates were defeated in the 1958 school board election, the Conservative Club members soon formed a new organization in Jackson County which became known as The Council for Better Education. Local papers referred to the Council for Better Education as a group that has "repeatedly urged reductions in school board budgets and tighter controls over its spending."

The Council for Better Education again nominated candidates for the three school board seats which were vacated in 1960, but again they were defeated in the election.

Although their initials, C.B.E., and their educational philosophy were closely related to that of the national group which has headquarters in Washington, D. C., the Council for Better Education was not affiliated with, and did not necessarily subscribe to, the program of the national group. One school board member who was labeled a "liberal," although he considered himself a conservative and felt that he had been made to look like a liberal only as a result of recent developments, wanted clearly to differentiate between the two groups. He stated that the Council for Basic Education (the national group) was composed of people who were dedicated to the improvement of education and wanted more humanities in the curriculum and greater emphasis placed upon the solid subjects. The Council for Better Education, in his estimation, combined a part of this philosophy with very bitter feelings against the local schools.

He said that representatives of the Council for Better Education had approached him and offered their support when he was first a candidate for the school board. The members who approached him said that they liked his philosophy, and under the circumstances they were not going to run a candidate in opposition to him. He was invited to attend a meeting at which he was to present his views on education. He said that in attendance at the meeting were two people who had run unsuccessfully for the school board in a previous election and two school teachers who had been fired from the school district. There were also two or three other people present who, for one reason or another, had some known grudges against the school district and school personnel. After he saw what the perspective of the group was,

he decided that he did not like what they stood for and did not want to associate himself with them.

The President of the Council for Better Education, elected after the 1962 school board election, said that the organization had slightly more than a hundred dues-paying members. Several contributed more than their regular dues. There was a constant fluctuation in membership, and only a small group constituted the stable core of members. He indicated that the organization was formed in 1959 for the purpose of promoting basic education. However, much to his annoyance, it had become involved in county issues unrelated to education, and he thought this was one of the things that had tended to weaken its position on educational matters. He said most of the members were conservative in their political and economic attitudes. They were the type of people who would oppose county zoning ordinances, welfare programs, and water fluoridation.

CHAPTER V

THE 1962 SCHOOL BOARD ELECTION

The Incumbent Board

It is apparent that in the fall of 1962 there were many diverse forces at work in Jackson County as the time approached for candidates to file for the four positions to be filled on the school board. The teachers were divided in their support of the school board and the chief administrative officer. Many teachers felt that the superintendent was providing the kind of educational leadership needed to improve education within the county and enhance the professional prestige of educators. Others felt that the schools were unnecessarily disrupted by experimentation; that the teachers were losing a measure of security as a result of the demands made by the school board and superintendent; and that some of the new measures, such as the Career Recognition Program, had proven unsuccessful and detrimental to the teaching profession in other communities. Some claimed that favoritism was shown to outsiders in promotions and that local teachers either had to "play ball with the central office" or be frozen in position. The newer programs placed greater demands upon older and less well-prepared teachers who were now called upon to participate in in-service training programs, curriculum development committees, and research activities sponsored by the State University and the local school district. Many teachers voiced their complaints to parents, some of whom were concerned by what they felt was inadequate progress being made by their children. Some teachers who felt that the fundamentals could best be taught by tried, true, and traditional methods let it be known that the new experimental programs were being developed by the school board and superintendent in defiance of the teachers' recommendations.

At the same time, the population pressure was producing increasing disruptions within the community. The dominant Democratic Party, as was noted, had undergone a serious split. The tax rate, as a result of the increases in the teachers' salaries voted by the school board and supported by the County Council, would be approximately 37 cents higher for each \$100 of assessed valuation than for the previous year.

The seven member school board and their professional advisor, the superintendent of schools, were in the central focus on each of these issues. Three members of the board had terms which would not expire until December, 1964. Two of these were women: one, the wife of a government worker, and the other, the wife of a managing editor of a publishing company. The third was a man, a scientist in a government agency, who held his Ph.D. from a major university.

The four incumbents who would be seeking reelection included a specialist in vocational rehabilitation, the manager of a consumer cooperative, a budget examiner for a governmental agency, and an economist. All had children in the public schools.

It was generally felt in the county that the school board was entirely in the hands of the "liberals." Actually, not all of the incumbents were liberals, in the traditional sense of the term, either on political matters or with respect to educational issues. Most of them felt that the educational program should stress the teaching of the fundamentals and that greater emphasis should be placed upon the achievement of excellence in the academic subjects. Three of the members of the board considered themselves conservatives, and felt that one of their functions was to act as the representative of the public to make sure that the professional educators adhered to public policies in education. Regardless of some differences, and some minor controversies which developed between the administration and the board, both the administration and all of the members of the board found it possible to work harmoniously together and to place emphasis upon what they considered to be the best interests of the community and its schools.

None of the board members believed that the quality of education which the community desired could be obtained without maintaining high levels of educational expenditure. All members of the board felt that it was essential that experimental programs be developed to determine the ways in which the school program could be improved, although at least one of the members thought that the superintendent was pushing a little too rapidly and too hard on some programs and possibly on his emphasis upon the research that accompanied the experimentation. All believed that there was considerable need for upgrading the teaching staff, and that the ways to do this included increasing salaries, providing ample resources for in-service education, offering salary rewards for particularly meritorious performance, and gradually weeding out the less competent.

The Challengers

After the filing deadline, there were nine contenders for the four school board seats. Two of the seats were district positions and two were at-large positions. All four of the incumbents were seeking reelection. In each of the district races, there was one challenger for each incumbent, and there were three challengers as well as the two

incumbents for the at-large seats, although one of the three subsequently waged no campaign and was urged to announce his support for the other two challengers.

There is no evidence that the four challengers ran as a team. There is also no evidence to suggest that there was collusion in their decisions to run for the school board. Each insisted that his decision to run was made independently, and additional evidence derived from other observers supported the validity of this claim.

The challengers indicated that each had different reasons for running and that various kinds of pressures from diverse sources were placed upon each of them to stand for election. Prior to the election, they were only casually acquainted with one another, and there was no attempt made by any of the candidates to formulate a common position on what were considered to be the most fundamental issues facing the school district. The fact remains, however, that in the heat of the campaign they emerged as a team and stood as a group in opposition to the existing policies of the school district and the incumbent members of the school board.

One of the four challengers, Mr. Graham, was a public relations expert for a large, local chain of banks. He said that he made his decision to run for the school board without regard to pressures that were placed upon him. He had a long-standing interest in community affairs and had become intensely concerned about the new educational programs. In his estimation, his own children were not receiving the kind of education they needed. He stood for the development of a fine school program with efficient use of expenditures. He placed great emphasis on the teaching of the fundamentals in the primary grades. He also felt it was necessary to control experimentation, because he thought it was adversely affecting the education of the children and causing division between the parents as a result of the spotty diffusion of the innovations in different parts of the county. In his campaign, he was offered the support of the Council for Better Education and the Americans for Constitutional Action. He did not want to be identified with either group, however, and he formally disavowed their support in the press. His position was that "the extreme right is just as bad as the extreme left." He was critical of the large amount of experimentation in the public schools and he stated, "I am not against progress, but I don't want to have too many balls in the air at one time."

The second challenger, Mr. Crothers, was a Republican and the manager of a small retail business. He lived on and also operated a farm in the up-county. He too had children in public school. Although he was not a college graduate, he had been at one time a teacher of high school English in a family-operated private school, and he expressed concern because he was not able to continue in teaching as a lifelong career. His father was a professor in a major university and

was the model after whom Crothers would like to have formulated his own life. Crothers was encouraged to run for the board by a close personal friend who was the headmistress of a private school in the community in which he resided. He claimed that no other person or group approached him and that he represented no group. When he was deciding whether or not to run, he called his aged father in a distant community to ask if he felt he was qualified to serve on the board. He reported that his father said, "Decidedly so!" So he ran. His wife and the friend who encouraged him to run formed his campaign committee and assisted him in developing his statement of the issues.

In his opinion, the issues in the campaign were all related to the controversy between progressive and traditional education. He said that he respected the superintendent as a business manager but, he felt that a school administrator, first of all, must be a man of letters. He stated, "We have in power in the schools today good managers but not men with broad academic backgrounds." He claimed that children need either a father or a father-image who is a man of culture. In his platform, the financial conservatism to which he subscribed was less significant than the educational concerns. He refused the support of the Council for Better Education because he believed its aims were noble but its methods crude. He said that the AAUW and the P.T.A. were opposed to him because they believed that a person without a college degree should not be a member of the school board.¹ He called them the "petticoat educational vigilantes" of the county. He claimed that a great deal of his support came from members of the school staff and that to a considerable degree he represented the teachers' point of view.

A third member of the challenger group, Mr. Smith, was a civil service examiner for scientific and technical personnel. In the campaign, he took a strong stand both for greater economy in operations and against the administrative overhead with which he thought the school district was saddled. He suggested that the board could live within its means and still stress quality teaching. Smith urged that emphasis be placed upon the teacher and his role in the schools and that the teacher be freed from the close supervision that currently interfered with his classroom performance. It was his opinion that teachers, particularly those in the lower grades, should be allowed more flexibility so that they could become "leaders instead of play-mates." At several times during the campaign, he spoke against wasteful spending on administrative and managerial items, against exorbitant construction costs, and against the dissipation of money for "frills." He claimed that the primary causes of exorbitant school costs were a top-heavy administrative organization, experimentation with curriculum, and such items as "television sets" in classrooms.

¹ The leadership of the AAUW disclaimed that they supported only candidates with college degrees.

The fourth challenger was a young attorney, Mr. Brown, who, during the time he had been an employee of the County Council, had completed his law degree through night school. He had four school-age children. His wife was a Roman Catholic and wanted their children educated in parochial schools. However, since these schools were overcrowded, the children's names were put on a waiting list, and they were forced to enroll in the public schools for some years until vacancies occurred in the parochial schools. His law practice appeared to be modest, and he was mindful of the sacrifices that he had made over a period of seven years to obtain his law degree. He said the quality of education that his children obtained in the public schools compared unfavorably to that of the parochial schools, and claimed that they could not perform the fundamental skills to the degree which he felt they should. He wanted to run for the school board before, but while he was working for his degree, he didn't have time for it. He said that he was a supporter of the Council for Better Education and had received its endorsement. He was somewhat equivocal as to whether the Council for Better Education had actually endorsed his candidacy or encouraged him to run. He built his campaign primarily around a platform stressing a more disciplined approach to education, and attacked the incumbents for holding what he considered to be a belief that the more money spent, the better the school program. He pointed to the lavish building expenditures, the rising tax rate and the fact that the school budget was the largest portion of the county budget.

He viewed the world as a warring camp between two conflicting parties. And he bluntly stated that although he did not know the other challengers prior to the election, he was united with them because "we are at war with a common enemy." Young and volatile, he personalized his position and viewed anyone who opposed him as a threat to his security who had to be removed from the scene as a matter of self-protection.

The Campaign

The campaign, conducted in a super-charged atmosphere, was vigorous, heated, controversial, and bitter. Mr. Graham claimed that during the campaign he drove more than two thousand miles within the county to attend meetings and speak to gatherings. Almost everyone had chosen sides. Some friendships were severed, and, seemingly, the best way to disrupt a social gathering was to mention the coming election, which was the chief topic of conversation.

The challengers charged the incumbent board with loose administration, empire-building, frills, and fads, and an abrogation of its responsibility to protect the public interest against the professional educators' waste and indifference.

The incumbents charged that the challengers lacked a fundamental interest in education, were exclusively interested in cutting taxes, and

lacked a real concern for the welfare of the children. They stood on their record as one of having maintained a vigorous building program in the face of overwhelming odds, and at one of the most reasonable cost figures of any school district in the area. They claimed that a nationally recognized, good curriculum had been provided as a result of an intensive study by both citizens and educators and that achievement tests of Jackson County children showed the remarkably high results of this curriculum. They stressed the degree to which newer programs were being added to the curriculum in order to upgrade the quality of education—foreign languages, intensified in-service and teacher training programs, pilot programs for improved methodologies, ungraded primaries, team teaching, television instruction, and the use of teaching machines. They emphasized that the programs being introduced were under intensive research to insure their being the best ways of teaching before being firmly adopted or spread to other schools.

Although most of the local newspapers found the challengers to be better copy, at least one county newspaper and the metropolitan newspapers which served the area cited the excellent record of the Jackson County schools and urged the re-election of the incumbents.

The school issue was not fought in a vacuum. It was a part of the larger issue involved in the control of the powerful County Council. Just a week prior to the election, the organization known as County-Above-Party published a "Bipartisan, Unbiased Voters Guide." The headlines cried:

"YOU SUFFERED EIGHT YEARS UNDER THE HOBNAILS OF ULTRA LIBERAL CONTROL: C-A-P OFFERS YOU THIS WINNING SLATE TO RESTORE REASON TO YOUR LOCAL GOVERNMENT."

C-A-P suggested that voters "take this ballot into the booth with you—remember in the voting booth, you are free from all pressures and control of the 'apparatus'." Under the C-A-P by-line, citizens were urged to recognize that "our irresponsible County Council, our visionary school board are wrecking your family budget." They quoted figures and some comments of unnamed authorities to expose "the myth of our 'quality' education," and they attempted to reveal "the plot behind the political web." They emphasized that "the last four years have been a period of sorrow for lovers of true education in Jackson County." They quoted the Book of Common Prayer: "We have left undone those things which we ought to have done; and we have done those things which ought not to have been done."

In recommending the four school board challengers for election, C-A-P editorialized:

Defiance of the law, obstructionism, orgiastic spending, reduced earning standards, lower per pupil achievement, expensive bureaucracy, teacher dissatisfaction—these constitute the School Board record on which the four incumbents are ranked.

To replace them, to inaugurate a period of progress and blot out the fumbling error of their predecessors are these candidates . . . All are pledged to provide true education, true learning and true value for every taxpayer's dollar.

All are committed to cleaning house, to ending bureaucratic empire building and to striking the shackles of red tape and petty details from the teachers.

All are agreed on the desperate necessity of wresting control of the educational system from the theoretical experimenters who never taught a day in their lives.

They identified names of former board members as the "who's who in the extremist apparatus."

C-A-P charged the incumbents on the County Council with extremism, irresponsibility, waste, indifference, profligacy, the abolition of volunteer fire departments, dictatorial county control, the establishment of a bureaucratic apparatus, and the abolition of incorporated towns. Cartoons were published showing moderates, complaining taxpayers, unsuspecting voters and the system of governmental checks and balances crushed under the two-faced dictator's heel. Claiming that the incumbents of both the County Council and, particularly, the school board were responsible for enormous tax increases, C-A-P urged that the rascals be thrown out and a new government be instituted.

On November 6, 1962, the citizens of Jackson County went to the polls and overwhelmingly endorsed both the County Council and school board candidates of the County-Above-Party organization. A total of 69,600 votes was cast. In the first district the challenger for the school board seat won by 6,500 votes over his opponent. In the third district, the challenger won by more than 16,000 votes, and the two challengers for the at-large seats won by 11,000 and 9,000 votes respectively. The metropolitan newspapers analyzed that, "Republicans, with the aid of conservative Democrats who lost in the May primary, gained control of the County Council." They declared that the conservative Democrats who had joined the Republicans chortled over the fact that the liberals "who had refused even to throw us a crumb" had been swept from office.

CHAPTER VI

THE AFTERMATH

Walters Faces A New Board

At the first school board meeting following the seating of the new members, all the officers of the board were elected from among the new majority. Formerly the challengers, they now became "the majority," while the incumbents who remained on the board were now "the minority."

The superintendent of schools had been working with a board which had not always agreed with him and which sometimes had differences of opinion which were played up by the press, but it was a board which had been able to agree upon objectives and develop a consensus. The new board to which it was his responsibility to give leadership was divided both with respect to goals and means. A new period would ensue for the superintendent in which decisions would be made only after considerable parliamentary maneuvers between two conflicting interests, each of which was endeavoring to achieve ends which it considered essential for the county and its schools.

Superintendent Walters reflected upon the election. He noted that he had been one of the issues in the election, by innuendo, if not overtly. He represented the "bureaucratic apparatus" which had fulfilled the desires of the incumbents. His aspirations for the educational enterprise, his educational philosophy, his policies and procedures had been worked out over five years of close association and cordial professional relationships with the incumbent board. The three incumbents on the board and the more than 45 per cent of the voters who voted for them would be looking to him for direction, leadership, and the salvaging of a program to which they subscribed and through which they hoped their children would gain a meaningful education.

But Walters was a realist. He recognized that the superintendent is the executive officer of the school board, not of particular factions within it. He was the leader of the whole school organization, which was now split with the community both in its allegiance to its former board and to him as its executive officer. There were some who were awaiting an opportunity to dance on his professional grave. There were others on his staff who previously had been either lukewarm or

mildly critical, but who would now feel that he needed their assistance and protection.

He also recognized that to the board majority he represented the "leader of the enemy." It was he who had the professional skill, knowledge and experience to give leadership both to the board and to the professional staff. To accomplish their objectives, if they were truly inharmonious with those of the previous board and its administrative staff, the majority would have to so maneuver the situation as to make Superintendent Walters vulnerable to attack and ineffective as a leader of his forces.

Walters faced an even more intense dilemma. His contract would expire in June, 1965, and in November, 1964, the three incumbents who were favorable to him would have to run for re-election. Even if they were to be re-elected, there would still be a majority of the board who had been elected on a platform which was hostile to him. He could resign now, but there was no place to go. One alternative was to stay at his desk and fight to salvage as much of his educational program as appeared possible. He could also continue to uphold the dignity of the educational profession, point out to the community the policy and program alternatives and their consequences for the education of their children, building confidence, in so far as possible, in those who sought to maintain a high quality of educational program, and attempt to change the opinions of some of the board members. As another possible course of action, he could attempt to co-opt the majority, or he could let himself be co-opted by them. At this point of decision, the only thing Walters knew for sure was that, unless he threw in the towel immediately, the next few years in Jackson County would be eventful ones.

The decision, he knew, was his to make. The law did not permit the school board to remove him from office once he was elected. This could be done only by the State Superintendent of Public Instruction, who, he knew, would be disinclined to yield to the new board majority, even if it sought his dismissal.

Walters decided to stay, dig in his heels and fight, at least until there was some personal justification for his leaving.

The new board members were sworn into office on December 6, 1962, and the board immediately began a new series of meetings. Walters had defined a relationship with the previous board, but now new definitions of relationships had to be established. This was all the more difficult because the majority was not only elected in opposition to him, but none had previously served on a school board. In addition to the difficulty of establishing a working relationship between the administrative staff and the school board, there were several issues which would have to be dealt with in the months ahead. These included the adoption of the school district budget for the ensuing academic year, the evaluation of the research on experimental programs,

the moving of the site of the junior college, an issue involving fingerprinting procedures for teachers, and the matter of the superintendent's tenure in the district. On each of these issues the board was divided in its perspectives. Board meetings became characterized by conflict between the majority and minority members, with each group attempting to out-manuever the other, if not to embarrass the other before the public. The superintendent was caught in the middle, but generally his recommendations won the support of the minority members and he became increasingly more closely allied with them.

The 1963-64 Budget

The nature of the superintendent's problem and the impact of the 1962 election upon the schools and the county are well illustrated in the deliberations and decisions that had to be made relative to the budget for the 1963-64 school year. Under state laws, budget-making for a school district is a complex process. This school district was fiscally dependent. The school board charged the superintendent with the responsibility of developing budget estimates for it. After the board reviewed, adopted, or amended the superintendent's recommendations, hearings were held for public comment, and, finally, the budget was submitted to the County Council for action. The County Council had been accustomed to acting upon line items within the budget, accepting or rejecting any particular amount. In the past, the County Council also felt that the acceptance or rejection of the budget placed a responsibility upon the school board to live within each line item as presented. The board did not always agree with this construction of the legal basis for budget determination, but it clearly had to recognize that the County Council could refuse to appropriate any amount of money for any reasons which it deemed advisable.

For the 1962-63 budget year, the school board requested a budget of approximately \$8,500,000 more than that of the previous year. After some deliberation, the County Council had reduced the amount of the increase by about \$2,500,000. Specifically, they had reduced the free summer school program, the number of counsellors and resource teachers, library allowances, and other non-personnel items. Even with these cuts, the budget represented an increase of approximately \$6,000,000 over the previous year.

This increase was the result of three pressures which confronted the board. First, enrollment estimates showed approximately 6,000 additional pupils could be expected in the Jackson County schools within the next year. The school board increased the budget proportionately in an attempt to maintain the current standards in spite of the increase. Second, as previously indicated, the board adopted new salary schedules for both teachers and administrators which greatly improved the salary schedules and which enabled the board fully to implement the policies that it had adopted with respect to profession-

al salaries. Third, as a result of curriculum studies and research on experimental programs, the board wished to expand successful programs, and a part of the budget increase was the result of its endeavor to implement the recommendations for expansion which it had received from the professional staff.

The Superintendent Presents His Estimates

On December 6, 1962, Superintendent Walters presented the capital budget for the 1963-64 fiscal year. Over the years, Jackson County kept pace with its capital construction needs through current levies rather than through the sale of bonds. In his budget message of the preceding year, the Superintendent had indicated a planned capital improvement for the 1963-64 school year of approximately \$14.3 million. On this date, however, he presented a capital budget of \$7.1 million. Deleted from anticipated construction was a new high school auditorium, a school for handicapped children, all building rehabilitation projects that had been contemplated, a new administration center, a new junior high school and a large addition to an existing high school. The report also recommended the deferment of two elementary school buildings.

Over 500 people attended the board meeting, but no discussion took place after the superintendent's presentation. It was indicated, however, that the capital budget would be discussed at a public hearing on January 30 and the operating budget on February 6. The superintendent announced that he would present the operating budget to the board and the public on December 12. Board member Graham, a member of the majority, requested stenotyped notes of the superintendent's presentation on the operating budget.

On December 12 Dr. Walters presented a proposed operating budget for \$55.5 million for the next fiscal year. This represented an increase of approximately \$5.1 million over the current operating budget. Dr. Walters described his request as "as tight a budget as we can present in light of present board policies." He said that he and his staff had made a conscious effort to keep judgmental decisions to a minimum in view of the recent election.

He explained the major reasons for the budgetary increase were an anticipated enrollment growth of 6.4 per cent and the opening of two new secondary and three elementary schools. He pointed out that this budget provided for a reduced level of service in certain areas. He noted that additional teachers were not recommended in elementary school art, physical education, library and special education, despite the expected increase of more than 2,000 elementary school pupils. In concluding his presentation to the board, he also pointed out that 83 per cent of the total budget was for personnel salaries. He indicated that the only places where the budget could reasonably be decreased would be in personnel costs. Walters felt this budget would maintain

the present level of quality of education but suggested that "we are not moving ahead."

The Board Asks For Recommendations For Reductions

Board member Graham immediately complimented the superintendent and his staff on the excellence of their presentation. He then moved the adoption of the following resolution:

Resolved, that the board request the superintendent to give board members to the best of his ability without prejudice as soon as possible and no later than December 21, his own listing of budget items in reverse order of priority to the amount of \$5,000,000 to help give the board additional perspective for better understanding and evaluation of the budget request.

The motion was seconded by member Crothers, also a member of the majority.

The minority members immediately attacked the motion. They said that the request could only mean reducing salaries or changing existing board policies, which were board decisions and not those of the superintendent. In response to their question as to why this precise amount, Graham said that it corresponded to the increase over last year's budget. All four members of the majority voted for the motion, while the three minority members voted against it. The superintendent then asked if he was to assume any priorities in existing board policies, but there was no response to his question.

In accordance with his instructions, on December 21, 1962, the superintendent presented his list to the board. He emphasized, however, that this list had been prepared at the request of the board to highlight selected items which the board would wish to study as it reviewed his recommended budget. He stated: "Therefore, this presentation containing the requested list of items should not be construed as a recommendation on the part of the superintendent for their removal from the budget as originally prepared."

He reiterated his statement that the budget could only be reduced by:

- (1) changing the salary schedules,
- (2) reducing the level of services and, hence, the funds needed for salaries,
- (3) reducing the level of non-salary items required to operate schools, and
- (4) reducing the services provided in the self-supporting items.

He pointed out that 83 per cent of the budget was for salaries, while non-salary items involved only 17 per cent of the budget. He argued strongly against any reduction in salary schedules. Because of the imperatives of maintaining satisfactory salaries to attract superior teachers, he did not include any reduction or freeze in salary for any type of employee in his list.

He pointed out, however, that because of this, his freedom of action in including items on the list was greatly limited. He implied that further reductions from his recommendations would have the impact of reducing the quality of the educational program. He claimed he had proposed neither increases in the salary schedules nor other improvements designed to extend the quality of the educational program.

The newspapers reported that the superintendent had recommended the elimination of kindergarten, driver education, and foreign language classes in the elementary schools. They pointed out the reluctance with which the superintendent turned over the list of 33 items, and one paper indicated that "if all items were cut, the result would be lower teacher morale, elimination of desirable programs, difficulties in teacher recruitment, and possibly false economy."

The reaction was immediate and violent. The majority members, acting outside of the school board meeting, announced to the press that they had no intention of eliminating kindergartens. The chairman of the board, Mr. Brown, announced that Dr. Walters' list was "a public relations document designed to irritate the public." The minority board members defended the document on the basis that the majority's order to Walters constituted an evasion of the board's responsibility.

Crothers told the press that he had not talked with the superintendent since the list was revealed. He said, "He apparently has been too busy preparing answers to statements purporting to be the position of the four new board members." Brown said he wanted to investigate indications that school officials had told teachers and supervisors to suggest possible cuts which would irritate the public. He said, "We have verified reports that teachers were asked to suggest budget cuts that would irritate the public. I did not say Dr. Walters said this. It might have been principals or other administration officials. We would like nothing better than to know just how far-reaching this thing is. It has no place in any school system, and I find it shocking."

The press immediately reported that budget issues were side-tracked as "full scale war erupted between two factions of the Jackson Board of Education." The issue obviously was not over *what* was to be cut from the budget, but over Dr. Walters' refusal to make the cuts in areas that would make the board majority's economy moves look good to the public.

At the first meeting of 1963, the chairman, Attorney Brown, reiterated his opinion that it was regrettable "that some teachers in some schools were requested by principals and others to suggest possible priorities that would be of a nature to create public irritation and resentment toward this board." He stated that some teachers who were personally affronted and insulted had the personal wisdom and courage to come forward and make this point known to him. He said, "I intend at all times to be a critic and a disciplinarian if necessary, of all those connected with the school system who do not share and work

in complete candor and good faith for essentially the same goals."

The minority members immediately attacked him for indicating a desire to usurp the responsibilities of the superintendent. They informed Chairman Brown that his role as a member of the school board was to determine policies and not to execute or administer those policies within the school organization. They also challenged his right to issue a press statement without consultation with other members of the board.

The Board Adopts a Budget

During the month of January, eight meetings were scheduled to explain the operating budget proposals to the public. One newspaper casually reported that "a large turnover was expected." Meanwhile, the board started to discuss with the County Council the items in the budget and to give the County Council its thinking with respect to the total budget. The County Council had employed a consultant to work with it in reviewing the budgets of the school district and other departments of the county government, in order to determine where significant cuts could be made in the county tax levy. The first joint review of the budget was held on January 9, 1963, and Chairman Brown opened the meeting by expressing the hope for "an era of cooperation between the two bodies such as never has been known before."

During the weeks that followed, the board and County Council engaged in an attempt to understand the nature and implications of the budget requests that had been made to them. Not all was "sweetness and light," but during this period it appeared as though each side of the dispute was attempting to feel out the opposition and conceal its own position in the matter. It was clear, however, that the economy-minded majorities of the board and County Council were determined to effect as many cuts as possible in the superintendent's proposals.

The public hearings were attended predominantly by citizens and groups which did not wish to see the budget unduly restricted nor the program cut back. Fifty-four persons testified at the meeting on February 6, the majority of whom felt that the superintendent's original recommendations constituted a minimum budget. Represented at the meetings were the P.T.A.'s, the AAUW and the Civic Federation. The Chairman of the latter group announced that it could not come to a decision on whether or not to support the budget, and it was obvious that the organization was seriously split by the controversy. The only spokesman for the opposition was a representative of the Americans for Constitutional Action, a senior at the State University, who said that good education "does not take school buildings on the scale of the Taj Mahal," and that "the area of administrative costs was the area of fat." One of the minority board members asked in what

detail he had studied the school budget, and he replied that he had not as yet seen it.

Following this hearing, the Committee for the Public Schools was formed. The purpose of the group, according to those who helped organize it, was to protect school personnel from the attacks of the board majority and to encourage the development of a budget that would continue to expand and improve the educational program. Some of the former leaders of pre-school groups felt that it was desirable to mobilize the people who were interested in "good schools" and to develop some political action and some leadership for opposing the majority on the board. No leadership seemed to emerge and, finally, the executive secretary of the Jackson County Educational Association started to talk to other people about the development of such a group. No one else seemed to be willing to take the responsibility for calling a group together so he finally invited to a meeting a group of 200 people who had been identified over the years with an interest in education. About 100 people came to the meeting, where it was decided that the Education Association should not be involved in such a group. The group was organized, obviously, to engage in political action, and it was felt that the less emphasis placed upon teachers' involvement, the better off they and the group would be. The executive secretary was actually criticized by members of his executive board for having initiated the organization.

The Committee defined its program as one of fact-finding about public schools in the county, providing information, representing the citizens' interest in education before official bodies, and taking the necessary political action to assure that the county would have first-class schools. In addition to having representatives present at all official meetings, the Committee for the Public Schools published a monthly bulletin which reported school activities and editorialized about the effects of the board majority upon the quality of education.

The majority decisions on the budget were revealed at the meeting on February 11. Administrative costs were cut back by \$110,630. The minority board members called the action irresponsible and a retrogression for the schools. The superintendent attempted to regain at least some administrative authority for determining where the cuts would be made. Recognizing the imminence of its defeat on the motion to accept the budget cuts, the minority attempted to delay action to permit the development of an independent survey of staff functions. The delaying action lost as a result of a solid vote of the majority.

Comparable situations prevailed on all other items. Proposed new staff positions were eliminated. Consultant fees were reduced. Support for the foreign language in the elementary school program was eliminated. Driver education was reduced, as was the number of assistant principals in the secondary schools. The minority attempted to find a few places where the majority could be divided. On the issue of ad-

ditional elementary school music teachers, one of the majority members *did* vote with the minority; but, on practically all other issues, the vote was four to three. After several long early-morning sessions, the board finally adopted the budget on February 13, in spite of the opposition and strong protests from the minority.

The budget as adopted amounted to \$54,763,526, or a net reduction of only \$733,131 from the superintendent's estimates.

The Budget Goes to The County Council

During the week of April 8, the County Council turned its attention toward the detailed analysis of the educational budget. The County Council completed its deliberations by cutting \$2.6 million from the board's requests. The cuts were made primarily as a result of the recommendation of the private consultant to the County Council for the deletion of 200 teaching positions, amounting to a cut of \$1.45 million from the budget. The consultant stated that, in his opinion, the pupil-teacher ratio in grades kindergarten through six should be increased to 30:1, and in secondary grades to 25:1. This, he indicated, would eliminate the need for 110 secondary and 90 elementary teachers. Other recommendations for reductions cut across all items on the budget, but the major item of concern to the citizens of Jackson County was the recommended elimination of 200 teachers. Opposition to the cuts developed on the County Council because some members thought the reduction in teaching staff was too radical a provision and that such action would result in a reduction in the educational quality of the schools.

One of the County Council proponents of the cut was a former school teacher, a young, conservative, Republican woman, who had been newly elected to the County Council under the endorsement of the C-A-P. She objected to several items in the school district budget and cross-examined school personnel, particularly the superintendent, on some of those matters. In casting her vote for the elimination of 200 teachers, she said that the teachers would be perfectly able to handle larger classes if they were not burdened with "useless chores such as critical, creative thinking workshops." She said that when she had been a teacher in the county schools, she had taught youngsters who were only five or six years younger than she. She said from her experience she knew that an instructor could handle 30 to 50 students, if she were left alone to do only teaching. She said, "It is very disconcerting to teachers to have a supervisor constantly in their room." Dr. Walters was quoted in the press as stating that the budget cuts would enlarge pupil-teacher ratios and thereby hinder teacher recruitment. This member of the County Council stated publicly at a Council meeting, "It ill-behooves him as a public official to make these remarks, and I personally feel they almost amount to insubordination and perhaps are almost cause to ask that his contract be revoked." One of the members of the majority on the school board publicly denied

that the school board was in any manner asking the Superintendent of Public Instruction to dismiss Dr. Walters.

In commenting on the action of the County Council, Chairman Brown said, "This is something we overlooked, and I'm glad the Council picked it up. The school board could have exercised a little more courage cutting the budget. There are a lot of neophytes on the board and this was the first time around for most of us."

At the next board meeting, the minority attacked the chairman of the board for failing to perform his two fundamental obligations:

- (a) to ascertain and be sensitive to the positions and opinions of the members of the board, and,
- (b) to be a spokesman for the majority opinion of the board in all matters in which the board is involved, even though in some instances, this might require actions which differ from his own personal inclinations.

The minority also charged that the County Council had been willing to reconsider the question of the teacher cut, but that Mr. Brown had refused even to poll the board members to ascertain whether they would like to defend their own budget. They maintained that "Our Chairman failed to supply the information or speak a word to the Council in defense of the budget that was submitted."

In reply, Mr. Brown reiterated what he had said to the Council, but said that he was speaking for himself and not the remaining members of the board. He concluded by saying, "I cannot see how the cuts which were made will affect the quality of education."

The majority board members felt it was necessary to reassure the teachers of the county. At a subsequent meeting, one of the members of the majority said that since the public had been exposed to all sorts of predictions about dire consequences to the school system, it was desirable to point out that none of these dire predictions seemed realistic. He stated that even some strong members of the P.T.A. complimented the County Council and the majority of the board for the reductions in the budget. He said, "Our teachers have not been coddled. They are comparatively well paid within the competitive area and have excellent working facilities." He moved the adoption of a resolution which would express "our confidence in the teachers' loyalty and professional ability. They are capable of asking for adjustments which may be required, and we encourage them to respond to the program needs of our community."

The minority seconded the motion but expressed concern that a situation had arisen which would make it necessary to take such action to reaffirm the board's faith in the teachers when it was never deemed essential by the majority previously.

Public Reaction

Immediately, active opposition to the board arose from groups and individuals who looked upon the 200 teacher cut as a threat to the

quality of education in Jackson County. The Jackson County Education Association published an advertisement in the local papers deploring the reduction of appropriations and warning that the reduction of 200 teachers would result in overly large classes. They added:

Our professional experience requires us to inform you that we shall be unable to give individual children the attention they presently receive. Mistakes may go unnoticed; misunderstandings will develop. While we shall continue to do our best, it will be limited by the increased number of children in our classrooms.

They also deplored the elimination of support for an evening high school and the reduction in the number of counsellors, assistant principals, and supervisors. They added:

Many of the other cuts have equally deleterious affects on the education of your children. We, the teachers, consider ourselves the most responsible and competent spokesman for education in Jackson County. We, therefore, advise you, the citizens, that the quality of education next year will suffer seriously as a result of the budgetary reductions imposed on the educational program by both the Board of Education and the County Council.

Chairman Brown responded to the teachers' advertisement by stating:

Not only do I personally feel this was in bad taste, but it attempts to mislead the citizens of this county by predicting an educational failure for the coming year when we know there will be no such failure, when the necessary scheduling of new personnel has hardly begun. It is perhaps most regrettable for the so-called memorandum purports to be representative of all teachers in our county, when in fact, this is simply not so. I sincerely suggest that it is time for the salaried directors of JCEA to stop harassing the elected administrators and to devote whatever abilities they may have to making JCEA the organization our teachers want and deserve.

The Committee for the Public Schools warned that the children of Jackson County were shortchanged and the educational program unduly restricted because:

The newly elected majority of the Board of Education did not ask for enough teachers; none to lighten the existing overload. Only 222 more for 6,000 additional students. Because the newly elected majority of the County Council denied 200 of these—refused to let over a million dollars you had already paid in school taxes be used to hire teachers—refused even to hear the Civic Federation, The Allied Civic Group, the League of Women Voters, the AAUW, the JCCPTA and the CPS—all of which petitioned the Council to restore the funds for teachers.

The budget controversy was in effect concluded but the conse-

quences were to linger on. The President of the County Council said:

Before taking action on the 1963-64 school budget for Jackson County as submitted to the County Council by the school board, the Council had the benefit of the views of the school board and its staff, interested groups and individuals and the Council staff. After considering all the facts, the Council acted. To date there has been no information that is sufficient to constitute a basis for even suggesting that the Council reconsider its action on the school budget. Therefore, the Council has no plans to undertake any such reconsideration.

The President of the Committee for the Public Schools said:

The President's action is a sad blow to the children who will be in over-crowded classrooms next year. I cannot believe he represents the views of all Council members. He arbitrarily denies the need for teachers, while he refuses the request of the Board of Education and six major civic organizations. The facts will show that the 200 teachers are needed and that the Council has the necessary funds sitting idle. The Council has full authority and full responsibility to make these idle funds available. It cannot duck its duty by telling the Board of Education to find 200 teachers like a magician pulling rabbits out of a hat.

The executive secretary of the educational association described the action of the County Council in a bulletin to the membership and summarized the tax situation that resulted as follows:

The Council set the school tax rate at \$2.10. The budget expenditures required only \$2.07. The debt service is .37 and the pay-as-you-go at .07 make a total of \$2.54, a reduction of .05 from the present \$2.59. Motor vehicle tax funds were .08 on the tax rate previously and a portion, .07 for school and .01 for county operations alone. Thus, the apparent reduction in county tax rate of .05 is actually an increase of .02 and there is a total decrease in revenues for schools of .12. There is \$891,000 surplus this year. The .03 extra tax from \$2.07 to \$2.10 will produce \$495,000 additional, making a total surplus for the next fiscal year of \$1,386,000. This is more than the 1.2 million dollar cut for 200 teachers.

It was estimated by several citizens of the community that the owner of a \$15,000 home experienced a \$5.00 reduction in his annual tax contribution as a result of the action of the County Council.

In Conclusion

The budget issue is only one dramatic evidence of the problems Walters faced in managing the school district and attempting to procure the resources necessary for its operations. Similar controversies of varying magnitude arose on almost every recommendation he

made. As previously indicated, he faced major controversies on many critical issues during the year, each of which would merit a full discussion. Each issue would further illustrate the same problem—two factions, both supporting goals considered undesirable by the other, both feeling a commitment to diverse publics which supported them for effecting their goals, both looking toward the future and wanting to build further support for their positions. And Walters knew that inevitably he was the sacrificial lamb. As superintendent, he was truly “the man in the middle.”

Immediately following the Council's action on the budget, Dr. Walters endeavored to redeploy his staff in order to make the most effective utilization of the educational resources available to him. The board had informed him that it would look with disfavor on any further experimentation in the public schools, and Walters knew that, faced with the restrictions that now were imposed upon him, he could not engage realistically in new efforts to change basic curricular programs or even to continue with some that were already started.

He saw some evidence of wavering cohesiveness by the majority of the board, but on relatively few and only minor issues. He noted that in the second year after the election, the chairman of the board, Mr. Graham, felt that the radicalism of his predecessor, Mr. Brown, served to impede the drawing together of the diverse elements into a cohesive school board group. Graham wanted to be known as the person who solved the controversy and brought harmony to the county, but the actions of former Chairman Brown embarrassed the majority, kept the wounds open, and frustrated the compromising endeavors of the new chairman. Walters also saw new controversial problems confronting the board upon which it attempted to take positive positions, which might result in a loss of public support.

One newspaper which had vigorously supported the majority against the incumbents in the 1962 election editorialized, “Can we afford them?”:

In 1962, the politically liberal school board was replaced by what was considered to be a politically conservative majority on the promise and premise that school costs could be bridled without diluting the quality of education in Jackson County.

Those of us who supported the change are now beginning to wonder if we can afford the conservatives.

The present conservatively dominated school board is beginning to make the previously liberal board miserly penny pinchers. Our big spending champion, School Superintendent Trent Walters submitted a school budget of approximately \$79,000,000 for 1965—an increase of some \$18,000,000 over the school budget for 1964. The conservative school board, except for the few nit-picking cuts, left Dr. Walters' request virtually unscathed.

But, in spite of the possibility of the decreasing cohesiveness of the

majority on the board of their support in the county, Dr. Walters recognized that he was still a focal point of controversy. He believed that he could no longer give the kind of leadership necessary to maintain an effective school organization, responsive to the needs of the community. He felt that many of the innovations he had fostered were doomed. He realized that he had to make a decision about his own future soon, and he began looking at other educational positions in the country.

The majority of the board was not unprepared for a change. Former Chairman Brown openly said that although he felt that Walters was a competent school administrator, his aims were so diametrically opposed to those of the majority that there was no basis upon which they could continue to work together. If Walters did not resign, Brown was prepared to request a conference between the members of the board and the superintendent to delineate the conditions under which he and the board might work toward common goals. Mr. Crothers agreed with him, and both were prepared to name the man whom they hoped could be enticed to become Walters' successor.

He would be the kind of person who had gained a national reputation for his conservative educational philosophy and for his emphasis upon traditional academic programs. They wanted, in other words, a man unlike Dr. Walters who would stress the so-called fundamentals and who would lead the schools in inculcating the traditional values. They would not be sure that the other members of the majority would agree with them, and they were sure the minority would be in strong opposition.

Both sides were also looking toward the November, 1964 elections when public support would be solicited by each faction. Actions taken now, both on the continuing tenure of the superintendent and the future of the programs he initiated, would certainly affect the outcome. The strategies that had to be designed must win support and not alienate the uncommitted voters. Dr. Walters thought that the recognition of this factor led to a growing moderation on the part of the majority which might enable the minority to win a few skirmishes—but the odds still appeared to be against him.

END

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